

## **Seven Days, Vol. 19 No. 7, April 16, 2012(\*)**

There are plans to group 200,000 families in villages in developing states within three years, in addition to the resettlement program in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and the Southern Region unless there is shortage of land. The resettlement program will be carried out only within the regions and not from one region to the other. Ato Mitiku Kassa, State Minister of Agriculture, said since the residents of Gambella, Benishangul Gumz, Afar and Somali states live in scattered areas, it has been difficult to put in place basic infrastructure. Therefore, he added, it has been found necessary to group people in villages. - Ato Mitiku disclosed that 1.3 million people have been resettled in Amhara, Oromia, Tigray and the Southern Region starting from 1996 (E.C.). He added that 99% of the resettled people have ensured food security. Preparations are underway to resettle over 69,000 people in 2004 (E.C.), and the program will continue in 2005 (E.C.), Ato Mitiku affirmed. - The villagization program was started last year in Benishangul Gumz State. The plan is to group 454,000 people in villages within three years. The president of Gambella State, Ato Umod Ubong, said the aim is to settle 15,000 people a year. According to Ato Mitiku, the resettlement programs would resolve the problems of food security. The Disaster Prevention and Preparedness Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture has a stock of 206,000 MT of grain and the Grain Reserve Agency has 180,000 MT of grain in its stock.

Ato Shiferaw Shigute, president of the Southern Nations Nationalities and People's State (SNNPS), affirmed that people from the Amhara State who had come to Gura Ferda Woreda, Bench Maji Zone in SNNPS after Sep. 2006 were not people who were evicted but who were seen off with honor based on a directive by the regional state (*Sendek, April 11*). - Ato Shiferaw said that out of the estimated 22,046 residents of Gura Ferda Woreda, about 800 were made to return to their original home state. A directive issued by the Southern Region government three years ago indicates that those who came to the zone prior to Sep. 2006 could continue living there while those who arrived after that date were made to return to their original localities. They were returned after consultations with the Amhara State government, Ato Shiferaw said (*ENA*).

Ethiopia's annual inflation rate slowed to 32.5% in March from 36.3% a month before, the Central Statistics Agency said. Food prices in Africa's second most-populated country rose 40.9% year-on-year in March, compared with Feb.'s 47.4% surge, while non-food inflation eased to 20.4% from 21.5% previously. Month-on-month, consumer prices rose 4.6% in March from 2.7% a month before, the agency said.

Ethiopia's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown by 11.4% during the first year of the Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) period (2003 E.C.), the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development said. Minister Sufian Ahmed said the foreign export revenue recorded a robust growth of 37.1% during the reported period. Accordingly, the overall balance of payment shows a significant surplus of 1.37 billion USD, Sufian said. According to him, during the reported period, Ethiopia secured 58.98bio Birr in tax revenue, which shows a 15.66bio Birr increase compared to the year 2009/10.

Sugar cane plantations are underway on 6,000 ha of land in southern Omo zone for the six Omo Kuraz Sugar Factories project in the Rift Valley area. It has earmarked 225m \$ for each of the six sugar factories that will be built by the Metal and Engineering Corp (MetEC). At present, the Ethiopian Waterworks Design & Supervision Enterprise (EWDSE) and the Southern Ethiopia Design & Supervision Enterprise (SEDSE) are finalizing the study and design of the Omo Kuraz Sugar projects (*WIC, April 11*).

Oromia is top on the list from among the regions in Ethiopia in terms of receiving Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) over the last decade (2004-2011), the Ethiopian Investment Agency said. Corporate Communication Director with the Agency, Getahun Negash, said Oromia attracted 124.46bio Birr of the over 357.98bio Birr total FDI flow Ethiopia received in the last 10 years, a share of 34.76%. According to Getahun, Addis Ababa City Administration, which used to be the top in terms of luring the largest amount of FDI over a decade ago, ranked 2nd receiving 86.15bio Birr of the total foreign investment in the country during the period. The third largest amount of FDI went to trans-regional investment involving more than one region, which accounts for 48.49bio Birr of the total amount. Amhara State ranks fourth luring 39.14bio Birr followed by Dire Dawa City Administration, whose share from the total FDI stood at 23.61bio Birr. Gambella and South Ethiopia Peoples states were in 6th and 7th places obtaining 12.84bio and 11.41bio Birr respectively. Benishangul-Gumuz, Tigray, Afar, Somali and Harari states ranked from 8-12 respectively receiving altogether the balance of the FDI (*ENA*).

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) will devote 60m USD to build or renovate 65 health centers around Ethiopia over the next five years, a press statement issued by the U.S. Embassy in Addis Ababa said. The program will reach people in South Ethiopia, Amhara, Oromia and Tigray states as well as Addis Ababa City (*ENA, April 11*).

Renowned Ethiopian painter, the Most Honorable Maitre Artiste World Laureate Afewerk Tekle, died in Addis Ababa on April 10 at the age of 80. The late Afewerk was born on 22 Oct. 1932 in the town of Ankober. He joined the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London after he was sent to England in 1947 to become a mining engineer and later he went to the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of London, the famous „Slade“. After he completed his studies, he returned to Addis Ababa but went back to Europe again for further studies. In Ethiopia, Afewerk opened his studio in the National Library of Ethiopia. Soon afterwards he was assigned by the Ethiopian Government to decorate St. George's Cathedral, where he worked on murals and mosaics for three and a half years. Though his interest in sculpture was second only to that in painting, Afewerk had produced the equestrian stature of Ras Makonnen of Harrar.